

VZCZCXRO2002

PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEH DU RUEHKUK RUEHMR RUEHPA RUEHRN RUEHROV RUEHTRO
DE RUEHKH #1673/01 3021447
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 291447Z OCT 07
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8955
INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE
RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE
RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE
RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001673

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/29/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [MARR](#) [AU](#) [UN](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: FORMER DARFUR GOVERNOR SUGGESTS POSSIBLE NCP PEACE
PROPOSAL

REF: KHARTOUM 1585

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Charge d'Affaires and Pol/Econ Chief met October 27 with the Governor of Khartoum State Dr. Abdel Halim Mutaafi. The Governor provided insights on the Darfur conflict and made suggestions on how it might be resolved. Mutaafi is the former Governor of Darfur State and is married to a descendant of the last Fur Sultan, Ali Dinar, but is part of the Nile Valley elite and an NCP insider. He said there was some discussion in the NCP of his serving as the new Darfur negotiator, but Mutaafi claimed his admiration for the Fur made him unsuitable. He represents a rare voice of reason on Darfur among NCP insiders. End summary.

The Zaghawa as Raiders

¶2. (C) Mutaafi said the current problem began when camel herders (both Zaghawa and Abbala Arabs) headed south and began displacing African farmers (Birgid and Fur). These two camel herding groups are still the core cause of many of the problems in the region, he said. The Zaghawa pushed out the Birgid (Mini Minawi, s men still control these areas) while the Arab tribesmen pushed out the Fur. Mutaafi said that both the Zaghawa and the Abbala Arabs are skilled at robbery; they attack at sunset to steal either vehicles or camels and then they travel overnight long distances, so that by morning they are far away, barely leaving a trace. Both are skilled at ambush of pursuing forces.

¶3. (C) Mutaafi said the Zaghawa are a warrior people who like to raid. The problem is that when the NIF split (ousting Hassan al-Turabi in 1999), all the Zaghawa went with Turabi into the Popular Congress Party. He said Zaghawa leadership is made up of "opportunists and bandits" like Mini Minawi, or principled Islamists like Khalil Ibrahim. Both Ibrahim and Turabi claim the link between them is broken but Mutaafi doesn't believe them. According to him, President Al-Bashir tasked Mutaafi with trying to woo Khalil Ibrahim into peace talks, but Khalil is not easily fooled. He said most of Khalil Ibrahim, s objectives are achievable) Darfur to be one region, equal representation in government, a vice-presidential slot ("we have two, why not three")) but one of his objectives is not acceptable to Khartoum: that JEM troops be kept together as a separate force after peace is achieved. "This is an idea he got from John Garang, s success with the SPLA and is not acceptable to Khartoum." He said Khartoum would accept having them absorbed into the national army and police.

14. (C) Mutaafi said Abdel Wahid is "insane" with delusions of grandeur and sees himself as "second only to Bush on the world stage." But he does speak for his people and appeals to Fur IDPs, which makes him important, at least for now. Mutaafi said the number of IDPs is overstated but is at least 700,000, which he said is the largest dislocation in the history of Darfur.

15. (C) Mutaafi recalled that the late Sultan of the Fur warned him in 2002 that 300 villages had been burned and that the Fur were arming themselves. The Fur financed their rebellion from Khartoum, with Fur traders, small businessmen, and unemployed university graduates raising \$2-\$5 dollars apiece and using this money to buy weapons. He said the Zaghawa played a duplicitous game, throwing in with the Fur at the last moment against Khartoum. Mutaafi claimed he warned Fur leaders that the Zaghawa would eventually turn on the Fur and try to seize Jebel Marra, which had until then been a homogenous "Fur paradise," and this has happened.

Risks for UN Peacekeepers

16. (C) Mutaafi said the problem is that the international community sees Darfur as a security/humanitarian issue when it is essentially political and economic, albeit with security and humanitarian dimensions. He fears that the 26,000 UNAMID troops will be swallowed up in the immensity of Darfur. That number of troops won't go far if spread out, and they should concentrate on providing security in cities

KHARTOUM 00001673 002 OF 002

and camps, at least. UNAMID could very well be attacked and they won't have any way to establish who the perpetrators were. Both the Arabs and the Zaghawa are fully capable of doing so and leaving no trace that it was them.

Proposed Solutions

17. (C) Because the problem is political and economic, Mutaafi said the real solution is intimately tied with tribal reconciliation. Mutaafi believes this is not impossible and can be done. It would mean getting the Fur back on their land as soon as possible. He said the Arab tribes who occupy that land are not farmers and are neglecting it. Meanwhile the Fur are growing angry and embittered in the camps because they have gone from being the wealthiest people in Darfur to "beggars in the camps and urban areas." He said the Fur are well organized and devout Muslims; the Quranic strictures about fighting for the sake of the oppressed and the weak appeal to them. A new generation of urbanized militant Fur youth will rise up and sweep away the traditional leaders and their more reasonable demands if the current situation goes on too long, he predicted. The key is to move quickly to reconcile the tribes, move the Arab tribes to new territories ("they need to be resettled") and return the Fur to their villages. Otherwise, he felt, the war in Darfur will continue for decades.

18. (C) Mutaafi proposed creating a resettlement area for the Abbala Arab tribes in the Goz Dango region of South Darfur, and to return the Fur to their lands which are currently being used by the Arabs. The (African) Masalit and the (Arab) Habbaniyah have some claim to this land, he said, but have not lived there for generations. Mutaafi described it as good land, with artesian water. He said the key is to find the funds to build these communities; each village would require wells, a mosque, a court ("very important in Darfur") a school, and a clinic. Mutaafi said one of the goals of the upcoming Arab Donors Conference (October 30-31 in Khartoum) is to raise money for this, especially for digging wells. He recalled that such an idea had been formulated before in the

so-called Western Savannah Project in South Darfur, supported intermittently by the international community in the 1980s.

Comment

19. (C) Given the Humanitarian Affairs Minister's recent comments about resettlement in advance of the Arab Donor's Conference on Darfur (reftel) and now Mutaafi's proposal for resettlement for the Arabs in Southern Darfur, the Khartoum government may be moving toward this as a possible solution. However there is nothing to prevent them from announcing the plan now, and moving forward on negotiations with the tribes that have land rights in Goz Dango. Certainly, there is nothing preventing the NCP announcing publicly that IDPs and refugees will get their land back and Janjaweed squatters will have to move. We believe the idea has merit, though obviously it lacks critical elements such as compensation for the Fur to restore their communities, justice for perpetrators of war crimes, and greater political participation for the Fur and other disenfranchised tribes in the region. Mutaafi's comments on the prospects for an additional vice president and reunification of Darfur as one state are useful but may not yet reflect the NCP more hardline consensus.

FERNANDEZ